

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's careful review of the present application, and respectfully requests reconsideration in light of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims Amendments/Status

Applicant notes the Examiner's decision to make the Restriction Requirement final. In this regard, Applicant respectfully requests that non-elected claim 2 be considered upon allowance of claim 1, because claim 2 includes all limitations of claim 1.

By this reply, claims 1-21 have been amended to clarify claim language and better define the claimed invention. Specifically, independent claim 1 now recites "at least one spray device ... being arranged parallel or obliquely to and at a distance from the axis of rotation so as to spraycoat the circular object arcuately about the axis of rotation and spray the coating material axially along or obliquely to the axis of rotation." These claim amendments find solid support in Figs. 6 and 8 as filed and paragraph 0042 of the published specification. In addition, claims 1-21 have been amended to conform to current U.S. practice and clearly convey the originally intended meaning of the claims. No new matter has been added throughout these amendments.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1 and 3-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. By this reply, claim 1 has been amended to clarify claim language and address the concerns raised by the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 5, and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,427,619 ("Ehinger"). This rejection is traversed for the reasons set forth below.

As noted above, amended independent claim 1 recites, in part, “at least one spray device ... being arranged parallel or obliquely to and at a distance from the axis of rotation so as to spraycoat the circular object arcuately about the axis of rotation and spray the coating material axially along or obliquely to the axis of rotation.” Given these features, aggregation of coating material on a spindle supporting a rim can be prevented (*see* paragraph 0008 of the published specification). Further, arcuate coating of a circular object can help use a less amount of coating powder than in conventional art (*see* paragraph 0007 of the published specification).

Ehinger relates to a drive system for the arm of a sprayer for upward and downward movement. *Ehinger* shows an arm structure 211 having mounted thereon a pair of sprayers 212 in Fig. 3. In *Ehinger*, however, sprayers are not unable to spray coating material axially along the axis to spray-coat a circular object. Specifically, as is clear in Figs. 1-3, the sprayers 12, 212 are provided to spray-coat a vehicle under the arm carrying the sprayers 12, 212. The arm further positions the sprayers 12 normal to the surface of the object 13 to be painted (*see* col. 3, lines 48-48). The sprayers 12, 212, however, are not capable of spray-coating a circular object axially along or obliquely to the axis of rotation.

Therefore, *Ehinger* fails to show at least the aforementioned features of independent claim 1, and thus independent claim 1 is patentable over *Ehinger*. Also, claims dependent therefrom are allowable for at least the same reasons set forth with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3-4 and 5-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Ehinger*. This rejection is traversed for the reasons set forth below.

As discussed above, *Ehinger* fails to show or suggest at least “at least one spray device ... being arranged parallel or obliquely to and at a distance from the axis of rotation so as to spraycoat the circular object arcuately about the axis of rotation and spray the coating material axially along or obliquely to the axis of rotation,” as required by independent claim 1. Claims 3-4 and 5-12 depend from claim 1. Therefore, claims 3-4 and 5-12 are also allowable for at least the same

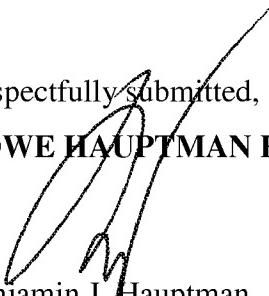
reasons set forth with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should be in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicants' attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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